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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

III

OF

GENERAL JOHN ADAIR.

WASHINGTON :

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SKETCH.

JOHN ADAIR, the third son of William Adair and Mary Moore, was born in Chester county, South Carolina, in the year 1759. His elder brother, William, and himself, received the rudiments of their education at Charlotte, North Carolina. Their father was a determined whig, and his sons soon abandoned their studies to take part in the Revolutionary struggle.

John Adair, though but seventeen years of age at the Declaration of Independence, had already exhibited among his neighbors, traits of that cool and daring spirit for which his after life has been so eminently distinguished. Modestly believing, however, that he was too young to obtain a commission, he entered as a volunteer in an independent corps under the command of the gallant Sumpter.

The tory party had greatly the ascendancy in the settlement. The whigs were proscribed and persecuted; and old Mr. Adair was particularly obnoxious, both on account of his own decided patriotism, and the intrepid character of his sons.

To glut their resentment, and strike terror into the refractory, a party of British and tories occupied the house of Adair; turned his family out of doors, taking from them every article of value, even to the shoe buckles of his wife; and, after carousing during the night, plundered or destroyed the furniture and moveables.

John Adair and his brother reported this outrage to Colonels Sumpter and Lacey, who were then collecting a force in the neighborhood to check the operations of the enemy. Sympathy for the family of Adair excited a spirit of resistance among his friends and acquaintances, and contributed, in common with other incidents of the same kind, to the formation of that Southern corps since so celebrated for their exploits under Marion and Sumpter.

Soon afterwards, John Adair, then in Sumpter's camp, received information that a small detachment of British and Tories were moving through the settlement in the direction of his father's. He asked, and received from his commander, a party to protect his parents and their dwelling. In the meantime, the enemy arrived at the house. The commanding officer, Captain Adamson, required of Mrs. Adair to produce her husband and two sons, upon pain of having her house burnt and farm laid waste, giving her till sun-rise the next morning to comply. The old lady protested in vain that her sons were with the American forces, and her husband from home. The alternative had been declared, and the captain pitched his tent in an adjoining wood.

At night the old man returned, and had gone to bed, when a gentle tap was heard at the window. It was the family signal. John was admitted, and told his father that he had come to protect them—that he had reconnoitred the enemy's camp, and would attack it before day-light the next morning.

At the stipulated time, the report of fire-arms was heard, and, before sun-rise, Mr. and Mrs. Adair received an invitation from John to visit the camp of the enemy, where they were introduced to Captain Adamson, then a prisoner of war.

The old lady, with perfect good humor, remarked, "she believed she had seen the gentleman before;" and added, "at that meeting, sir, you commanded me to produce my husband and my two sons to you this morning before sun-rise; the sun has not yet risen; here is my husband, and here is one of my sons: the other, I assure you, is not within a day's walk, or he would have been here too." The officer felt the sarcasm, was ashamed of his conduct, apologized, and accepted an invitation to breakfast in the house he had threatened to burn.

When Sumpter's force was surprised and dispersed by Tarleton's cavalry,* John Adair and his brothers, William and James, fortunately escaped. They were among the few who immediately rejoined their chief, and endeavored to re-establish the corps. John was soon afterwards despatched, with a single companion, to reconnoitre Tarleton's position.

Exhausted by hunger and fatigue, they reached a house not far from the out-posts of the British, and, while they were taking some refreshment, were surprised and made prisoners. They were heavily ironed, and marched to Camden jail, where they were chained to the floor, and fed on bread and water. An officer visited them every two or three days, to offer Adair and his fellow-prisoners liberty and promotion in his Majesty's service, and to threaten them with death in case of refusal. These offers were constantly and contemptuously rejected. One day, when the prisoners were amusing themselves with a game at cards, the officer entered, and told them that they had but thirty minutes to live. They looked at each other in silence for a moment, until the merriest fellow among them said, "come boys, we'll play out our hands." The game

* 18th August, 1780.

was finished. The thirty minutes expired ; the prisoners were marched out ; the death-notes of a muffled drum preceded them to a spot within sight of the jail windows, where some of their companions had before been executed. The commanding officer harangued them on the subject of their duty to their king, and, finally, laid before them the alternative of enlisting or instant death. Adair answered for himself and his fellows, in the brief, bold language of a soldier, "lead us to the gallows."

Whether the firmness of the prisoners won favor, or the object was merely to intimidate, is not known. The threat, however, was not executed on any of the party, but they were marched back, by a circuitous route, to prison.

After a confinement of three months, the enemy despaired of making any impression on such stubborn rebels, and they were ordered to Charleston. A prison-ship, at anchor in the harbor, was to receive them. To guard them more effectually, their arms were pinioned, and they were marched on foot under a strong escort. At night they were quartered in an old house, where a prisoner named Wade, who had managed to conceal a knife, first cut his own fetters, and then Adair's. They eluded the vigilance of the guard ; but they escaped from the house apparently only to perish in the forest, for Adair, almost blinded with the small-pox which he had caught in prison, was obliged to wander three days without food or medicine, assisted only by his faithful but almost exhausted companion. On the fourth day they received information of the position of Marion's force, and that night arrived at the encampment. It was dark and stormy. They had waded a creek, and were passing up the bank, when they were hailed,

“Who comes there?” “A friend,” was the reply. “A friend to whom?” “A friend to the Americans.” The officer of the guard was called. Adair and Wade were ordered to enter, and then, too late, discovered, they were surrounded by enemies, and a second time prisoners. Marion had decamped the day before, and Tarleton had taken his place. The fugitives were remanded to Camden jail, where heavier irons were placed upon their hands and feet, and rivetted to the floor. In this situation they remained three months longer. Sumpter, meantime, made every effort to effect their release; first offering equal, and then more than equal, terms of exchange. One of these attempts was made through Mrs. Adair herself. She left her home in company with a lady whose husband was confined, and a British officer proposed to be exchanged for her son. On their way to camp, she was compelled to pass a sleepless night at the foot of a tree, holding her horse’s bridle in her hand. On her arrival, she saw seven bodies suspended on a gallows near the jail windows. She trembled lest she was too late; assured herself by a fearful glance, and waited, breathless with terror and anxiety, on Cornwallis. He heard her supplication; refused the exchange; but had the humanity to soften his refusal by permission to see her son. She provided some food, and was admitted to the prison. The gloomy, foul, and miserable dungeon, struck her with horror; and, in the sick, emaciated, and wretched inmate, who raised himself in his chains, and called her “mother,” maternal tenderness, alone, could have pointed out her son. Impure air, unwholesome food, disease, and long confinement, had changed him in every thing but his indomitable spirit. The old lady embraced him, as she supposed for the last time, and departed in despair. What his mother’s entreaties and his commander’s attachment could not

effect, a brother's valor and good fortune at last accomplished. Although the cavalry under Tarleton had cut up and dispersed the little band of Sumpter and Lacey, fragments of that gallant and devoted party still floated through the country, and annoyed the enemy with the restless activity and desperation of guerrilla warfare.

One of these parties, commanded by James Adair, fell in with three British officers in the rear of Cornwallis' army, whom they took, and carried into a swamp. The youngest of the prisoners was immediately despatched with a letter to the British officer in command at Camden, saying that, if John Adair was not released in twelve hours, it would be taken for granted he was murdered, and the lives of the prisoners should atone for it. The device succeeded. John Adair was exchanged, and, as soon as he had recruited his health, rejoined his commander. He was appointed a lieutenant, and rose, step by step, to the rank of major; in which rank he served until the end of the war, having never been absent from active duty one week, except while a prisoner, or engaged in bringing down men from the upper country. He was present at the battle of the Eutaw Springs, and participated in the affairs of Rocky Mount and the Hanging Rock, and many other actions and skirmishes of less notoriety. During the battle of King's Mountain he was a prisoner in Camden.

In the year 1786, General Adair removed to Kentucky. At that period, when civilized and savage man were contending for the empire of those beautiful and fertile regions which now support a large and happy population, military skill and courage were of the highest consequence. The hardy adventurers who had gone forth into the wilderness, rallied, each in their own settlement, round the man who displayed

the greatest capacity for warfare. The arrival of General Adair, therefore, was hailed with pleasure by the inhabitants of Mercer county; and they soon learned to consider him an invaluable member of their little commonwealth. Whenever Indian murders or depredations were committed, every eye was turned on him with that ready and implicit confidence which a master spirit inspires in extreme danger. Sagacious in council, prompt and daring in execution, he vindicated their choice by his success, and became almost equally an object of terror to the savages and of affection to his countrymen. Nor was his ardent spirit confined to the defence of a single neighborhood. Active operations were carried on against the common enemy, and many daring enterprises and bloody conflicts in which Adair bore a conspicuous part, have furnished romantic or melancholy stories familiar to the first settlers, and still often heard at firesides beyond the mountains. The Government availed itself of his services. In 1791 he accompanied General Wilkinson on an expedition against the Wea and Miami Indians on the Wabash, and aided in the destruction of their towns, thus most effectually securing the frontier. General Wilkinson took occasion, in his despatches, to speak of Adair's conduct in the highest terms.

In the campaign against the Wea towns, to the North of Eel river, in 1791, Adair held the office of Brigade Major, under Wilkinson. The force consisted of about 400 men, and information received from a prisoner, induced them to believe, that a thousand warriors were waiting for an attack at Miami Towns. Wilkinson, however, first took and burnt the Eel river Towns, and then bent his course towards a Kickapoo Town on the Wabash. In advancing towards it, he found the

country so excessively wet and swampy, that he was compelled to give up the enterprise, and proceeded obliquely down the Wabash to Tippecanoe, near which, there still remained a small Kickapoo Town.

After attempting to ascertain from some of the oldest prisoners, the direction of the town in question, Colonel James McDowell, with his battalion, and thirty-five prisoners, advanced towards it, while General Wilkinson, with General Adair and Major Caldwell's battalion, went down to the town at the mouth of Tippecanoe, which had been burnt in Scott's campaign, the month before. On approaching the ruins, they discovered a considerable party of savages, and knowing that sufficient time had elapsed, they concluded, that the thousand warriors said to have been at the Miami Town, had got there before them.

Notwithstanding the supposed superiority of the enemy's force, Adair, by order of the General, took a part of Caldwell's battalion, plunged into the river, swam across it, and charged the Indians, who were so alarmed by the intrepidity of the onset, that they fled. It was afterwards ascertained, that the party consisted of about three hundred warriors, who had encamped the night before, within half a mile of Wilkinson's quarters, and held a council of war, to deliberate on the propriety of attacking him. They forbore doing so, from a fear that the thirty-five prisoners might be sacrificed.

In 1792, Adair had command of a party charged with the duty of reconnoitring, and escorting provisions from Cincinnati and Fort Hamilton, to Fort St. Clair. The late Governor Madison of Kentucky was second in command. They

were attacked by a large party of Indians, led by the celebrated Little Turtle, a war chief of the Miami tribe. The onset was furious, and the fire of the enemy, for some time, could scarcely be withstood. Madison past Adair, in the hottest of the conflict, and was struck, as he afterwards mentioned, with the animated and noble expression of his face.

The soldiers were retreating before the firing and numbers of the savages, when Adair charged in person, with his sword and tomahawk, upon the thickest of the enemy. The officers and men instantly followed their commander, with desperate enthusiasm, and the Indians in turn gave way. Adair escaped unhurt; Madison and Taylor were wounded. After driving the enemy before them for half a mile, they returned to the battle ground. Adair, seated on a log, was reflecting on the conduct of an officer, who commanded a garrison within sight of the battle, without sending to his relief; when a lieutenant from the fort came up, and accosted him with compliments on the honor he had acquired. Adair replied, with reproaches on the commander of the garrison: the young officer, bursting into tears, said, "if you knew me major, you would not blame me: I went on my knees, and begged him to let me take fifty men to your assistance: but he refused, and said it would be sending them to be murdered." When the report of this battle was received by General Wilkinson, he wrote Adair a letter of congratulation, complimenting, in the highest terms, his gallantry and good conduct.

In 1793, he was again called into service, and marched with General Wayne to the North West, where he assisted in building the fort at Greenville, and supplying the Western Posts with provisions, preparatory to the operations of 1794.

But the campaign ended without bloodshed, and Adair returned to his family. In 1799, he was elected a member of the Convention which formed the Constitution of Kentucky. In the next, and indeed for many succeeding years, he represented his county in the State Legislature, where his course was marked by manly, liberal, and enlightened opinions. In the winter of 1805-6, he was elected a Senator in Congress, a situation which he filled so much to the satisfaction of his constituents, that, notwithstanding the turbulence of the times, no objection has ever been urged to his political conduct. General Adair's circumstances did not admit of his continuing in public life, and having purchased an interest in a valuable tract of land in Louisiana, he left home in December, 1806, to visit it. Upon his arrival in New Orleans, he was arrested by order of General Wilkinson, his papers seized, and both sent on board of a vessel for Baltimore, there to be examined by the Government. As soon as this arrest was known in the city, a writ of habeas corpus was issued. General Wilkinson appeared before the Judge, and in his reply expressly admitted that he was not in possession of any evidence whatever against Adair, but that he felt it his duty to arrest all strangers, particularly those of military distinction, coming from that quarter of the country which had been the scene of Burr's conspiracy.

The Judge ordered General Adair to be released; but he was then on board the vessel, and beyond the reach of the civil authority. On the voyage, his life was in danger, from violent and unremitted sea-sickness. When he arrived in Baltimore, the officer who accompanied him, as prosecutor, laid before Judge Nicholson the evidence on which he had been arrested. The Judge treated the evidence in such a manner as

to extort from the officer an apology to the accused, in open Court. Discharged, by order of the Judge, he immediately went to Washington City, where he solicited an investigation from the Attorney General, who replied there was no evidence on which to ground a prosecution.

Having a second time made application without success, he returned to Kentucky. Determined to vindicate himself, in the clearest and most conclusive manner, he commenced suit at Natchez, against General Wilkinson, for false imprisonment. His only object was to compel Wilkinson to exhibit his evidence, and to shew, incontestibly, that there was not the slightest reason to suspect him of any treasonable or other unlawful design. After the institution of this suit, he returned home. The late Governor Madison gave him, on his return, the strongest marks of friendship and esteem; generously and earnestly urging him to become a candidate for the office of Governor, at a time, when he himself had every prospect of being elected. Nor was it by these tokens alone Adair was taught to believe the injustice he had suffered had not weakened the affection of his friends, or effaced the memory of his services.

After the first disastrous events of the late war, in the Northwest, had thrown a gloom over the country, and increased the confidence of the enemy, the gallant and venerable Shelby determined to stake anew, in his old age, the laurels he had acquired in his youth. Before he undertook the enterprise, he sought for Adair, to become his counsellor and companion in arms. Adair received his letter in New Orleans, and hastened to join his fellow soldier of the Revolution. He repaired to the Capital of Kentucky,

received the appointment of Aid-de-camp, and assisted in conducting some of the most successful and brilliant exploits in the annals of the war. It would be invidious to attempt an apportionment of the merit of that Campaign. Suffice it to say, that the sagacity, skill, and courage of Adair, were justly estimated by his associates in peril and suffering; and the degree of honor attached to him, by them, was measured with no stinted hand. After his return to Kentucky, Governor Shelby, in a letter filled with the most kind and friendly assurances of respect and esteem, enclosed to him the following acknowledgment of his distinguished services.

CAMP AT LIMESTONE, *November 2d, 1813.*

General John Adair having acted as my first Aid-de-Camp on the late expedition into Canada, I cannot, in justice to his merit or my own feelings, take leave of him without expressing my warmest approbation of his whole conduct during the campaign, and the obligation I feel under for his attachment to my person, and the zeal and promptitude with which he always executed my orders, particularly in the battle of the 5th of October last, on the river Thames.

ISAAC SHELBY.

When Louisiana was threatened with invasion, and looked to the Western States for assistance, Shelby, more than ever convinced by experience, that he had not mistaken the character of Adair, conferred on him the appointment of Adjutant General, with the rank of Brigadier. In the decisive action, this appointment, in consequence of the illness of General Thomas, the Major General, gave to Adair the command of the Kentucky troops.

The memorable battle of the 8th January is familiar to every one. The part that Adair acted on that occasion may be collected from the official documents.

“General Adair, who, owing to the indisposition of General Thomas, brought up the Kentucky Militia, has shown that troops will always be valiant when their leaders are so. No men ever displayed a more gallant spirit than did those under that most valuable officer. His country is under obligations to him.”*

The commander in chief on that occasion did no more than justice to Adair. He spoke only the sentiments of the army and the country. The Legislature of New Orleans expressed their grateful sense of Adair's services by a resolution, which was enclosed to him in the following letter from the Governor.

NEW ORLEANS, *February 25th*, 1815.

SIR: To a soldier who has done his duty in all the conflicts in which his country has been involved from the war of Independence to the present moment, it must be a matter of great exultation to notice the valor and firmness of the children of his old friends: to be convinced that they are the true descendants of the original stock. That the young men of your Brigade should have looked up to you in the hour of battle, is only a continuance of that confidence which their fathers had in a Chief whose arm had so often and so successfully been raised against the foe. The enclosed resolution of the General Assembly of Louisiana will show you the high sense which is entertained in this State of your services, and those of your brothers in arms. Be towards them the vehicle of our sentiments, and receive for yourself the assurance of my respect and best wishes for your health and happiness.

W. C. C. CLAIBORNE.

The Legislature of Kentucky, also, honored him with a complimentary resolution.

The following extract from a letter of General Adair, published in the Lexington Reporter, of October 27, 1817, con-

* General Jackson's address to the army, 21st January, 1815.

tains some highly interesting details. He had been invited by the General-in-Chief, before the attack, to look at the works, and speak his opinions freely.

“After I had examined his lines, by his order, and was informed by him of his real strength, he asked what I thought of our situation—did I believe we could defend those works, or not? I told him, there was one, and but one way, by which we could hope for success: that he must have a strong corps of reserve, to meet the enemy’s main column, wherever it approached. After some further conversation on the subject, he agreed that I should act with the Kentuckians, as a reserve corps, and directed me to select my ground for an encampment, to govern my men as I thought most proper; that I would receive no orders but from himself. This arrangement was verbal: I received no written order on the subject. In consequence of this, I encamped in the rear of the centre of the whole line, without any reference to General Carroll’s command. I immediately informed Colonel Slaughter, and the field officers, of my command of our destination, that in case of any accident to myself, they might be prepared to carry it into effect. In obedience to this arrangement, on the morning of the 8th, as soon as we discovered the enemy were in motion, the Kentuckians were formed into two lines, in close order, and marched within about fifty yards of the breast works, and halted. I went to the breast work, myself, to see where the main column would approach. The fog was thick, and it was not yet day: I could only judge from their noise, as they advanced. The enemy soon commenced the attack, with their cannon and rockets: I then discovered their main column, and returning to the Kentucky line, ordered Colonel Slaughter to march, with his right, near to the nearest of our batteries; his right would govern the whole. The men were not at the breast-work more than two or three minutes, when the enemy approached, and our musketry commenced firing. I then discovered the enemy’s column was somewhat further to the left than I had expected. Three companies were instantly ordered from Colonel Slaughter’s right, and marched to the left. I have ever been of opinion, and still am, that it was owing to this disposition of the troops that the enemy were repulsed. Had we been placed on any part of the line, with our due portion of it to defend, no part of it would have been strong enough to repel this column. Their discipline was such, that they could only be checked by shooting them down.”

The commanding General, it would seem, had contemplated stationing his men, in equal force, on every part of his line. The suggestion of a reserved corps, occupying a place near the centre, which could be moved, with greater facility, to the real point of attack, as soon as it should be known, was a suggestion of Adair's. Its value will be perceived, in a moment, by every military eye. The commanding General saw it at once. The frankness and promptitude with which this important change of disposition was suggested, and acted on, was honorable, both to him who gave, and to him who adopted it. That it contributed, greatly, to the effectual repulse and dreadful slaughter of the enemy, is beyond a doubt.

The Commander-in-Chief appreciated it justly, and history will record it with that tribute which it would not become us now to offer.

During the late animated canvass for the Presidency, the extent to which Adair, by his presence and counsel, had promoted the success of our arms on this memorable occasion, became the subject of public discussion. Nothing can more strongly illustrate the magnanimity of his character, than his conduct on that occasion. An attempt had been made to give him the whole credit of the victory, at the expense of the commanding General, between whom and himself an unpleasant controversy had existed, in relation to the account given by the former, in his letter to the Secretary of War, of the behaviour of the Kentuckians, on the opposite side of the river. Forgetting every thing, but his sense of justice, General Adair bore witness to the merits and services of General Jackson, in terms, which proved him alike incapable of envy or servility.

We give the letters entire.

LOUISVILLE, September 29, 1826.

DEAR SIR : Many considerations induce me to obtrude this letter upon you. I solicit you, as briefly as you shall choose, to let me know your *opinion* of the merits of General Jackson, for his *defence* of New Orleans, in the late war, as well as his claims upon the West, and the Union at large, for those services. I am aware of the importance of this request, and that it will be reluctantly granted ; but impelled, as I am, from considerations of justice, to a distinguished citizen, free from party motives, I hope that you will give me an answer, as soon as your convenience will permit.

I am, Sir, with sentiments of high regard,

Your obedient servant,

WORDEN POPE.

Gen. JOHN ADAIR.

MERCER COUNTY, October 15, 1826.

DEAR SIR : Owing to an absence of ten days from home, your's of the 29th ult. was not received until last evening, and being now on the eve of setting out on a journey to Washita and New Orleans, I have but little time for reflection, or recollection, on the subject of your letter. I will, however, in justice to General Jackson, state, that all his measures for the defence of New Orleans, after I arrived there, were well calculated to insure success, if success could be hoped for, from the very slender and inadequate means under his command.

I did not reach his camp until the 3d January, at which time his line of defence was nearly finished, and his men at their posts. He had fought his first battle on the 23d December, which, although a victory could not be claimed on either side, was certainly of the utmost importance to him, from the effects it produced in his own camp, as well as on the enemy.

To appreciate fully and fairly the military talents displayed, or services performed by General Jackson, during the siege, would require a detail of the difficulties and dangers which he had daily and hourly to meet. Such a detail would not be proper at this time, nor is it necessary for me to make it. An opinion seems to prevail with many, that an officer may do himself much honor, and acquire great fame, who possesses little more than daring courage and bodily strength. This

may happen with an inferior officer, a colonel of a regiment, or even a general of a brigade, who acts, always, under the orders of a superior, and has no occasion to think for himself. But the Commander-in-Chief of an army, in a difficult and complicated service, must possess a cool, calculating head, a vigorous mind, a rapidity of reasoning, with clear perceptions, that will bring him, at once, to conclusions, on which he is ready to act, for time, with him, is often all-important; and from my experience, through life, I believe there are fewer men thus highly qualified to distinguish themselves at the head of an army, than to fill any other station in any Government. Yet, such qualifications, alone, ever did, and ever will, enable a Commander-in-Chief to acquire great fame, and perform eminent services; and it would be illiberal and unjust to deny to General Jackson the possession of these qualifications.

In truth, it was the prompt and firm display of these qualities, that inspired the raw and untrained materials of which his army was composed, with confidence and resolution, to resist, successfully, the tremendous assault of the veteran invaders.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN ADAIR.

WORDEN POPE, Esq.

While these events were passing, the suit of Adair against Wilkinson, pending in the Court at Natchez, was, from term to term, continued by the defendant.

At length, further procrastination became impossible, and the trial was brought on. Reasonable ground of suspicion against Adair, was all that Wilkinson could be required to prove. He had had eight years to collect his evidence, and prepare his defence. The concourse of spectators was unusually great. Instead, however, of the long expected disclosures of Adair's confederacy with Burr, the defendant's counsel were obliged to admit they had not been able to obtain any such evidence, and the jury instantly returned a verdict of

\$2,500 damages, at the same time, declaring, they would have been made much heavier, but for the defendant's notorious poverty.

Satisfied with this triumphant vindication of his character, not only from guilt, but the suspicion of it, General Adair, out of regard to the family of Wilkinson, made no attempt to enforce the judgment, until a bill was brought forward, in Congress, to indemnify the defendant. During the progress of that bill, in the House of Representatives, it was urged by many of the speakers, that as the arrest was made by Wilkinson, manifestly without reasonable ground of suspicion, he ought not to be indemnified. On the other hand, it was contended, that although no such ground of suspicion appeared, yet it should be presumed he acted with correct motives, and although mistaken, ought to be protected. The latter opinion prevailed, and Wilkinson was allowed a sum, large enough to cover the damages and costs of the judgment.

This arrest, in its consequences, has been more injurious to the fortune, than to the reputation of General Adair. His affairs became much embarrassed, from his absence and heavy expenses. In 1820 he was elected Governor of Kentucky; an honor soothing to his feelings, certainly, but not at all beneficial to his interests. At the expiration of his term of service, he retired to his farm, near Harrodsburgh, where he still resides. For many years, General Adair held several thousand acres in the extensive tract of land in Washita, granted to Baron Bastrop. To this land he had looked, as a source of fortune to his children, whenever a judicial decision on the title could be had. He had once been offered an immense sum for his interest in it. The long delay of Govern-

ment to act definitively, upon large private land claims, either by referring them to the tribunals for adjudication, or ordering a sale of the lands, by which the individuals, purchasing, would be liable to suits, has been injurious to the country, and ruinous to the claimants. General Adair, among others, was compelled to part with his interest to a large capitalist, who can more conveniently await the tardy progress of national justice.

In the loss of two favorite daughters, both of whom had grown up to womanhood, admired and beloved, the General endured an infinitely heavier calamity.

Time, the great consoler, philosophy and religion, have gradually alleviated his sorrows ; and, in the midst of his children and grandchildren, respected by his friends, and idolized by his family, the evening of his life is gliding tranquilly away.

It is impossible for any one to be more generous and disinterested than General Adair. For his revolutionary services he neither demanded or received any remuneration whatever. While with Sumpter, he got neither pay nor clothing ; and the corps to which he belonged was not even furnished with subsistence, by Government, except for a short time, while it was attached to Greene's Army, and drew rations like the rest.

Shortly after the late war was declared against Great Britain, he was strongly urged to enter the Mexican service. An agent of that Government made him, by its authority, the most tempting offers. The rank, it is believed, of Lieutenant-

General, and appointments of the value of ten or fifteen thousand dollars a-year. He had spent much time among the French and Spanish inhabitants of Louisiana, and was acquainted with their language and manners. All these inducements he steadily withstood. The answer he gave was characteristic. Even if his own country was at peace, he would engage in no enterprize without the express sanction of the Government. While war continued she might require his services, and her claim was superior to all others.

General Adair is now in his 71st year. He was married in 1782, to Catherine, daughter of Henry Palmer, of St. Matthew's Parish, South Carolina. He has seven daughters and two sons still living. In person he is about six feet two inches high, of spare habit, grave countenance, aquiline nose, and grey eyes. Plain in his dress; in speech, slow; in manners, simple, retiring, and unaffected. There is an air of dignity in his calm, unobtrusive politeness, which commands respect, while it repels familiarity. He is habitually taciturn; yet, his disposition is social, and his affections warm. He is proverbial for the equanimity of his temper, and the steadiness of his friendships, and in all the domestic relations of life he is without reproach. His years and labours have not impaired the energy of his mind: misfortune has not destroyed his cheerfulness. He lives retired, and continues to read much: but though habitually sedentary, or rather recumbent, he is yet capable of sustaining great fatigue, and often performs long journies on horseback. No one can be freer from vanity, or egotism, than General Adair. He is never the hero of his own story; and though answering promptly, and kindly, all questions relative to others, whom he generously praises or frankly blames, as the occasion requires, he evades, if possible,

or replies laconically, to enquiries about himself. The few persons who are honored with his intimacy, are aware of his habits, and set too high a value on his good opinion, to run the risk of wounding his delicacy. Such, indeed, is his reserve, in writing, or speaking, on this subject, that the materials of this slight sketch have not been collected without great difficulty.

They were originally obtained at different and distant periods, from members of his family, companions in arms, or intimate friends, who were acquainted with the facts, or had heard them casually mentioned by himself, or others, worthy of entire confidence. The incidents of the revolutionary war came principally from the lips of his parents. The information thus communicated was first reduced to the form of a narrative, by an elegant and accomplished lady, now, unhappily, no more, who wrote it in a few hours, while suffering under a severe, painful, and ultimately fatal illness. In such a composition, some errors were unavoidable; nor can it, after many enquiries, be expected, even now, to have reached entire accuracy. The details, however, are believed to be generally correct, and of the truth of every important fact, no doubt is entertained.









